Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (canceled).

2. (currently amended) The system for collecting and presenting survey information of claim 36, [[1,]] further comprising: a Computer Telephony Interface (CTI) unit, wherein said CTI unit is connected to said connection device to monitor the status of said connection device, and further wherein said CTI unit is connected to said CATI unit to monitor the status of said CATI unit and said agent using said CATI unit; and still further wherein said CTI unit is connected to said IVR unit to monitor said conducting of said automated survey.

3. (canceled).

4. (currently amended) The system for collecting and presenting survey information of claim 36, [[3,]] wherein said ~~pre-determined~~ survey includes ~~format uses said~~ a drill-down survey technique, wherein a following survey question depends on the answer to a previous question.

5. (canceled).

6. (currently amdned) The system for collecting and presenting survey information of claim 36, [[5,]] wherein said system is adapted for accepting ~~conducting of said automated and/or said manual surveys~~ includes the use of a verbatim response to a survey question, wherein the participant can orally communicate detailed opinions to

said IVR unit or said CATI agent, respectively, and further wherein said verbatim[[s]] is ~~are~~ stored in said database.

7. (currently amended) The system for collecting and presenting survey information of claim 6, further comprising:

a processing unit for converting data stored in said database ~~said stored responses to said surveys~~ into survey information; and

a presenting unit for presenting said survey information to a consumer.

8. (original) The system for collecting and presenting survey information of claim 7, wherein said survey information is derived from a plurality of surveys derived from a plurality of participants, and further wherein said system presents said survey information to said consumer over a computer network, and still further wherein said consumer must be validated before said system will allow the consumer to access said survey information.

9. (original) The system for collecting and presenting survey information of claim 8, wherein said survey information is available for presenting to said consumer within 24 hours of the completion of the conducting of said plurality of surveys.

Claims 10-15 (canceled)

16. (currently amended) A process for collecting and

presenting survey information comprising the steps of:

(I) selecting a participant from a list of potential participants;

(II) connecting the participant to a survey communication system;

(III) inquiring whether the participant is willing to accept a transfer to an automated survey;

(IV) transferring the participant's communication system connection to an automated survey unit only if the participant assents to said transfer;

([[I]]V) conducting said survey interview, wherein said conducting is performed by said automated survey unit if the participant assented to said transfer, but said conducting is performed manually if the participant does not assent, and further wherein an automated survey unit accepts oral responses from the participant, said oral responses being processed using voice recognition into survey data;

(VI) if said user is undergoing an automated survey, manually continuing said survey from the current point forward upon a voice request of the user to stop said automated survey; and

(VII) saving said survey interview in a database.

17. (original) The process of collecting and presenting survey information as in claim 16, wherein said conducting of said survey interview is performed by

providing survey questions to participant using a pre-determined survey procedure utilizing drill-down questioning, wherein a following survey question depends on the answer to a previous question.

18. (currently amended) The process of collecting and presenting survey information as in claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

(VIII) processing said survey data into survey information;

(IX[[I]]) saving said survey information in a database; and

(~~III~~X) presenting said survey information to a consumer.

19. (currently amended) The process of collecting and presenting survey information as in claim 16, wherein said transferring of the participant's communication system connection to said automated survey unit occurs by action of an agent using a terminal only if said survey participant agrees to said transfer, and further wherein said survey interview is conducted manually by an agent if the participant does not agree to said transfer.

20. (previously presented) The process of collecting and presenting survey information as in claim 19, wherein said conducting of said survey interview is performed by providing survey questions to the participant using a pre-determined survey question procedure utilizing drill-down questioning for said conducting of both manual and automated surveys, wherein a following survey question depends on the answer to a previous question.

21. (previously presented) The process of collecting and presenting survey information as in claim 19, wherein said agent can transfer the participant back to said automated survey unit to continue said survey interview, and further wherein the participant participating in an automated survey can be transferred to said agent by a voice command from the participant.

22. (previously presented) The process of collecting and presenting survey information as in claim 21, wherein said conducting of said survey interview is performed by providing survey questions to the participant using a pre-determined survey question procedure utilizing drill-down questioning for said conducting of both manual and automated surveys, wherein a following survey question depends on the answer to a previous question.

23. (currently amended) The process of collecting and presenting survey information as in claim 22 , further comprising the steps of:

(VIII) processing said survey data into survey information;

(IX[[I]]) saving said survey information in a database;

(~~III~~X)presenting said survey information to a consumer.

24. (currently amended) The process of collecting and presenting survey information as in claim 19, further comprising the steps of:

(VIII) processing said survey data into survey information;

(IX[[I]]) saving said survey information in a database;

(~~III~~ X)presenting said survey information to a consumer.

25. (currently amended) A process for collecting and presenting survey information comprising the steps of:

(I) selecting a participant from a list of potential participants;

(II) connecting the participant to a survey communication system;

(III)transferring the participant's communication system connection to an automated survey unit if said survey participant agrees to said transfer, wherein the participant participating in an automated survey can be transferred to said agent by a voice command from the participant such that said agent continues with said survey, and further,

wherein said survey interview is conducted manually by an agent if the participant does not agree to said transfer,

wherein said conducting of said survey interview is performed by providing survey questions to participant using a pre-determined survey procedure utilizing drill-down questioning, wherein a following survey question depends on the answer to a previous question;

(IV) conducting said survey interview, wherein said conducting is performed by said automated survey unit or manually, and further wherein said automated survey unit accepts oral responses from the participant, said oral responses being processed using voice recognition into survey data;

(V) saving said survey interview in a database.

(VI) processing said survey data into survey information;

(VII) saving said survey information in a database; and

(VIII) presenting said survey information to a consumer, wherein said presenting is available within 24 hours of said conducting of said survey.

26. (previously presented) A process for collecting and presenting survey information comprising the steps of:

(I) collecting survey data, said collecting comprising the steps of

(A) selecting a participant from a list of potential participants, wherein said selecting is done according to specified schedules;

(B) connecting the participant to a survey communication system, said connecting comprising the steps of:

(i) attempting to connect with the participant via said survey communication system, said attempting including the steps of:

(ii) requesting that the participant agree to communicate with an Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) unit for a survey interview; and

(iii) collecting call record information, wherein said call record information is stored in a database;

and

(C) conducting said survey interview, wherein said conducting is performed by said IVR unit if the participant agreed to communicate with said IVR unit, and further wherein said conducting is performed by a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) agent if the participant did not agree to communicate with said IVR unit, said conducting of said survey interview comprising the steps of:

(i) asking survey questions of participant using a pre-determined survey question procedure utilizing drill-down questioning, wherein said survey questions provide sufficient survey data to allow for the creation of survey information; and further wherein survey responses by participant are done orally, and still further wherein said survey

data optionally includes voice interviews;

(ii) saving said survey data in said database, wherein said saving includes voice recognition processing of said oral responses of the participant if said conducting of survey interview is performed by said IVR unit, wherein said voice recognition occurs at approximately real-time, and further wherein the voice recognition processed response is used to determine a next survey question;

(iii) transferring said communication system connection to a CATI unit if the participant requests such a transfer while the IVR unit is conducting said survey interview, wherein said CATI agent uses said CATI unit to continue said conducting a survey interview;

(iv) transferring said communication system connection to a CATI unit when said survey question procedure requires such a transfer, wherein said CATI agent then conducts said survey interview using said CATI unit, and further wherein said CATI agent can transfer said communication system connection back to said IVR unit to continue said survey interview;

(v) monitoring said survey question procedure status, wherein said status information can be made available for display;

(vi) terminating said conducting a survey interview when said pre-determined survey question procedure is complete or when the participant requests such termination;

27. (previously presented) A process for collecting and presenting survey information as in claim 26, further comprising the steps of:

(I) processing said survey data, wherein said processing converts said survey data collected from a plurality of participants into survey information, said processing comprising the steps of:

(A) generating consumer satisfaction measures;

(B) generating employee rating measures;

(C) generating employer or organization rating measures;

(F) generating quality assessment measures; and

(G) analyzing said generated measures and survey data;

and

(H) storing said survey information in said database;

(II) providing a survey information consumer said survey information, said providing further comprising the steps of:

(A) connecting a survey information consumer computer to a presenting system, wherein said connecting is over a computer network, said connecting comprising the steps of:

(i) logging the consumer's computer into the system, wherein the consumer identity is verified; and

(iv) preventing the consumer not verified from accessing said medical survey information;

(B) presenting said survey information to said consumers, said presenting comprising the steps of:

(i) providing said consumers with options for viewing aggregates of said survey information;

(ii) providing said consumers with options for viewing summaries of said survey information;

(iii) providing said consumers with options for viewing a subset of said survey information;

(iii) providing said consumers with options for viewing said survey data; and

(iv) formatting said presented information for presenting by said consumer

computer, wherein said presenting can be graphical, auditory, and textual;

(C) customizing said presented information to the particular needs or access privileges of the consumer, wherein some consumers may have access to a subset of medical information; and

(D) allowing the user to log off said system.

and

(III) evaluating said process for collecting and presenting survey information, said evaluating comprising:

(A) evaluating the performance of said CATI agents; and

(B) evaluating the performance of said voice recognition processing.

28. (previously presented) A process for collecting and presenting medical survey information for a medical care provider comprising the steps of:

(I) collecting survey data, said collecting comprising the steps of

(A) selecting a participant from a list of potential participants, wherein said selecting is done according to specified schedules;

(B) connecting the participant to a survey communication system, said connecting comprising the steps of:

(i) attempting to connect with the participant via said survey

communication system, said attempting including the steps of:

(a) initiating a survey communication system connection;

(b) transferring said connection to a CATI unit if said connection is successful, wherein if said connection is not successful, selecting a new participant to be the participant;

(c) requesting that the participant agree to participate in a survey, wherein said requesting is performed by said CATI agent using said CATI unit;

(d) requesting recall information from the participant if the participant has not agreed to participate in said survey, wherein said requesting is performed by said CATI agent, and further wherein said recall information includes a request to connect again at a different time or using a different communication system; and

(e) terminating said connection after said requesting of recall information if the participant has not agreed to participate in said survey;

(ii) requesting that the participant agree to communicate with an IVR unit for a survey interview; and

(iii) collecting call record information comprising:

(a) overall connection attempts;

(b) connection attempts for each of the participants contacted; and

(c) connection durations;

wherein said call record information is stored in a database;

and

(C) conducting said survey interview, wherein said conducting is performed by said IVR unit if the participant agreed to communicate with said IVR unit, and further wherein said conducting is performed by said CATI agent if participant did not agree to communicate with said IVR unit, said conducting said survey interview comprising the steps of:

(i) asking survey questions of participant using a pre-determined survey question procedure utilizing drill-down questioning, wherein said survey questions provide sufficient survey data to allow for the creation of medical survey information; and further wherein survey responses by participant are done orally, and still further wherein said survey

data optionally includes voice interviews;

(ii) saving said survey data in said database, wherein said saving includes voice recognition processing of said oral responses of the participant if said conducting of survey interview is performed by said IVR unit, wherein said voice recognition occurs at approximately real-time, and further wherein the voice recognition processed response is used to determine a next survey question;

(iii) transferring said communication system connection to a CATI unit if the participant requests such a transfer while the IVR unit is conducting said survey interview, wherein said CATI agent uses said CATI unit to continue said conducting a survey interview;

(iv) transferring said communication system connection to a CATI unit when said survey question procedure requires such a transfer, wherein said CATI agent then conducts said survey interview using said CATI unit, and further wherein said CATI agent can transfer said communication system connection back to said IVR unit to continue said survey interview;

(v) monitoring said survey question procedure status, wherein said status information can be made available for display;

(vi) terminating said conducting a survey interview when said pre-determined survey question procedure is complete or when the participant requests such termination;

(II) processing said survey data, wherein said processing converts said survey data collected from a plurality of participants into medical survey information, said processing comprising the steps of:

(A) generating consumer satisfaction measures comprising:

(i) consumer loyalty measures;

(ii) medical care satisfaction measures;

(iii) medical facility satisfaction measures;

(iv) medical staff satisfaction measures;

(v) positive comments with reasons; and

(vi) negative comments with reasons;

(B) generating staff rating measures comprising:

(i) staff loyalty measures;

(ii) staff performance measures;

(iii) staff satisfaction measures; and

(iv) staff continuing education measures;

(C) generating doctor rating measures comprising:

(i) quality of medical care measures;

(ii) doctor performance measures;

(ii) doctor satisfaction measures;

(iii) doctor loyalty measures; and

(iv) doctor continuing education measures;

(D) generating care delivery measures comprising:

(i) cost measures including:

(a) cost of medical care paid by consumer measures;

(b) cost of medical care paid by non-consumer measures;

(c) cost of providing medical care measures; and

(d) overhead costs measures;

and

(ii) profit measures;

(E) generating medical care quality assessment measures comprising:

(i) mortality measures

(ii) morbidity measures;

(iii) complications measures;

(iv) medical procedure results measures;

(iv) medical procedure follow-up measures;

(vi) patient mental health measures;

(vii) social impact measures;

(viii) hospital stay length measures;

(ix) technical quality measures; and

(x) per member per month (PM PM) cost measures;

(F) analyzing said generated measures and survey data, said analyzing comprising the steps of:

(i) aggregating survey data to form assessments;

(ii) normalizing comparisons between specific named units, said named units including:

(a) doctors or specialists;

(b) medical care organizations or divisions;

(c) staff persons;

(d) managers;

(e) specific medical treatments; and

(f) patient group status;

(iii) determining changes over time;

(iv) determining differences geographically; and

(v) generating summaries;

and

(G) storing said medical survey information in said database;

(III) providing a medical survey information consumer said medical survey information, said providing further comprising the steps of:

(A) connecting a medical survey information consumer computer to a presenting system, wherein said connecting is over a computer network, said connecting comprising the steps of:

(i) logging in the consumer computer to the system, said login comprising the steps of:

(a) processing a consumer login request, said login request comprising the steps of:

(1) providing said consumer with a login prompt;

(2) accepting a consumer login input, said login input comprising:

a user ID; and

a user password;

and

(b) processing the consumer login input, said processing comprising the steps of:

comparing said user ID against a verified consumer list, wherein if said user ID is verified, then:

verifying said user password by comparing said password to a stored password corresponding to said user ID, if said user password is verified then:

permitting consumer access to the system;

and

preventing the consumer not logged in from accessing said medical survey information;

(B) presenting said medical survey information to said consumers, said presenting comprising the steps of:

(i) providing said consumers with options for viewing aggregates of said medical survey information;

(ii) providing said consumers with options for viewing summaries of said medical survey information;

(iii) providing said consumers with options for viewing a subset of said medical survey information;

(iii) providing said consumers with options for viewing said medical survey data; and

(iv) formatting said presented information for presenting by said consumer computer, said presenting including:

graphical display;

auditory presentment; and

textual display;

(C) customizing said presented information to the particular needs or access privileges of the consumer, wherein some consumers may have access to a subset of medical information; and

(D) allowing the user to log off said system.

and

(IV) evaluating said process for collecting and presenting medical survey information, said evaluating comprising:

(A) evaluating the performance of said CATI agents; and

(B) evaluating the performance of said voice recognition processing.

29. (previously presented) A process for collecting and presenting medical survey information for a medical care provider as in claim 25, wherein the participant is selected from the group of doctors, medical staff, medical patients, a family member of a medical patient, and a medical care employer; and further wherein the participant gave or received services from said medical care provider.

30. (currently amended) A system for collecting and presenting survey information from a plurality of participants, said system comprising:

a connection device connected to an external communication system for connecting said communication system to the survey participants;

a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) unit connected to said connection device, wherein, for each one of the participants, a corresponding one of a plurality of agents uses said CATI unit to ask said one of the participants a set of manual survey questions, said survey questions including a question requesting permission for performing an automated survey;

an Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) unit connected to said CATI unit, wherein, for each one of the participants, said CATI agent transfers said one of the participants' communication connection to said IVR unit only if said one of the participants agrees to participate in an automated survey, wherein said IVR unit then accepts oral responses from said one of participant, wherein

for any of the participants who did not agree to participate in said automated survey, said CATI unit being adapted to provide a manual survey by providing survey questions to each one of the agents corresponding to those participants who did not agree for proving a manual survey using substantially the same questions from said automated survey to receive the oral responses, wherein

the system is adapted such that, upon request of any participant undergoing an automated survey, said system transfers said requesting participant to the CATI unit to continue said survey in a manual manner; and

a database for storing said responses to said manual surveys and/or said automated surveys.

31. (previously presented) The system of claim 30, wherein the survey includes a drill-down survey technique utilizing one or both of responses already provided by the current survey participant and historical responses provided by other participants to determine a subsequent survey question to be asked of the current survey participant.

32. (previously presented) The system of claim 31, wherein, when the automated surveys are being conducted, said IVR unit is adapted to receive a response from any of the participants that causes the CATI agent to transfer those surveys receiving said response back to one of the agents.

33. (previously presented) The system of claim 31 further comprising a processing unit for processing said responses stored in said database into useful survey information for presentation to a user

34. (previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein, when the automated survey is being conducted, said IVR unit is adapted to receive a response from the participant that causes the CATI agent to transfer the survey back to the agent or another agent.

35. (previously presented) The system of claim 1 further comprising a processing unit for processing said responses stored in said database into useful survey information for presentation to a user.

36. (new) An integrated survey system comprising:

a connection device connected to an external communication system for connecting said communication system to a survey participant;

a database for storing responses to survey questions;

a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI)unit connected to said connection device, wherein said connection device is adapted to transfer the participant communication connection to

said CATI unit when said connection to the survey participant is successful, and wherein

said CATI unit is adapted for use by the agent for communicating with the participant, and further wherein

said CATI unit is adapted for presenting a survey to said CATI agent for allowing the agent to present said survey to the participant using said CATI unit, and wherein participant responses to said survey are used to generate data for storing in said database;

an Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) unit connected to said CATI unit, wherein said CATI unit is adapted for permitting said agent to transfer the participant's communication connection to said IVR unit for conducting said survey in an automated manner, wherein

said IVR unit accepts oral responses from the participant for generating data stored in said database, and wherein

said IVR unit is further adapted to terminate the automated survey at any point and transfer the participants communication connection back to said CATI unit upon voice command by the participant, and further wherein

said system is adapted such that said CATI unit presents said survey to said agent from the point of termination by said IVR unit so that the agent can continue said survey in a manual manner.